



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Egypt: Exit and entry procedures at airports and land borders; incidence of bribery of Egyptian border officials to facilitate departure by individuals with fraudulent travel documents or outstanding financial, military, or legal obligations or who are sought by the government for political reasons; the punishment for border officers caught taking such bribes (2006 - May 2008)

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Visas

According to the monthly *Travel Information Manual* of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), visas are required to travel to Egypt (May 2008, 152). Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website states that there are three types of Egyptian visa: the tourist visa which is "usually valid for a period not exceeding three months and granted on either single or multiple entry basis "; the entry visa which is mandatory for any foreigner for purposes other than tourism, and the transit visa (Egypt n.d.a. see also Canada 1 Feb. 2008, Sec. 4). However, exemptions to this requirement exist (IATA May 2008, 152). The visa can be issued at ports of entry for a maximum stay of 30 days but certain nationals must obtain visas in advance (ibid., 153). Visas can be obtained at Egyptian Diplomatic bodies abroad or at the Entry Visa Department at the Travel Documents, Immigration and Nationality Administration (TDINA) (Cairo International Airport n.d. Sec. "Egyptian Visa Regulations"; Canada 1 Feb. 2008, Sec. 4). The website of the Consulate General of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Kingdom (UK) also states that applications can be made by mail (Egypt n.d.b.). As well, a person can apply on behalf of friends and family (ibid.).

According to the website of the Consulate General of the Arab Republic of Egypt in the UK, the following documents are required to apply for a visa

1. Original passport - valid for at least 6 months from the date of issuance of the visa
2. Two (2) recent standard passport photographs (45 mm x 35 mm), coloured, taken against a white background, with the name of the applicant written on the back
3. The fees - cash or postal order only

...

6. Photocopies of the passport or travel document are required (2 photocopies of photo page) as well as 2 application forms with one photo each. (ibid.)

According to the website of the Consulate General of the Arab Republic of Egypt in the UK, only one visa is required if a passport holder has children under 16 years of age included in their passport (ibid.). Children who hold their own passport need their own visa (ibid.).

Restrictions on Egyptian nationals

The United States (US) Department of State *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006* reports that unmarried women under the age of 21 years must obtain permission from their fathers to obtain passports and to travel (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 2.d). Married women used to need permission from their husbands in order to obtain a passport or to travel; however, this is no longer a legal requirement (ibid.). In practice however, permission is still often required by the police (ibid.).

Country Reports 2006 states that there is a restriction on overseas travel for men who have not completed compulsory military service (ibid.). However, exceptions to this restriction exist (ibid.).

Entry/Exit Procedures

A Canadian migration integrity officer at the Embassy of Canada in Egypt stated that Egypt has entry and exit controls at all its border points that are administered by Immigration, a division of the national police force and the Ministry of Interior (Canada 15 Apr. 2008a). All luggage is subject to possible customs inspection when passengers arrive in Egypt (ibid.).

During entry and exit procedures, all travellers entering and leaving Egypt must submit an entry/exit card, which lists basic biometric data information, destination, means of transportation and local address (ibid.).

As well, on leaving Egypt, all travellers and their luggage are subject to security inspection prior to reaching the airline check-in area (ibid.). The Travel Report for Egypt published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Canada indicates that

When exiting Egypt, all travellers must show a proof of entry stamp in their passport at the point of departure. Without a proof of entry, an exit stamp cannot be obtained and travellers will be denied exit. (Canada 1 Feb. 2008, Sec. 4)

An entry/exit card is issued to travellers (foreigners and nationals) and administered by Egyptian Immigration (Canada 15 Apr. 2008b). The card is similar to the Canadian declaration card issued on entry to Canada but distinct from a visa (ibid.). According to the Canadian Migration Integrity Officer:

The card is handed to each passenger aboard the aircraft or picked up on arrival at the airport, prior to getting into immigration line and handed to each passenger at the check-in counter on leaving the country. In other words, all travelling public, domestic and international must hand the card over to an

Immigration Officer on entering and/or leaving the country. (Canada 15 Apr. 2008b)

Incidence of bribery of Egyptian border officials

According to *Country Reports 2006*, "[t]here was a widespread public perception of corruption in the executive ... branch" (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 3). According to the World Bank and reported by the Utstein Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, an organization operated by a private European foundation addressing corruption challenges worldwide (Utstein, n.d.b.), Egypt is one of the most corrupt countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region (Utstein n.d.a). The Administrative Control Authority is the body monitoring corruption in Egypt but, Freedom House reports that, "it lacks jurisdiction to investigate accusations of corruption against certain categories of state employees" (2007, Sec. "Anticorruption and Transparency").

The Utstein Anti-Corruption Resource Centre declares that Egypt has "emerged as a leader in the Middle East to promote reform in this area" (Utstein n.d.a). The US Department of State 2006 *Trafficking in Persons Report* corroborates this opinion stating that in 2005, Egypt "improved training for border security officials to prevent smuggling and trafficking, and incorporated innovative tools to interdict traffickers as they travel through the Sinai Desert" (US 2006). According to the same source, Egyptian authorities have increased scrutiny at major airports in Cairo and Sharm el Sheikh to prevent traffickers from entering the country (US 2006, Sec. "Prevention").

Punishment

According to Dr. Ahmed Refaat Khafagi whose publication was translated into English by Howard L. Stovall, Attorney at Law, an expert on Middle East commercial law established in Chicago (Stovall n.d.a.), Articles 103 through 111 of the Egyptian Criminal Law punish bribery (Khafagi 1986, Sec. 5). According to Freedom House, punishment for the crime of bribery can include fines and imprisonment (2007 Sec. "Anticorruption and Transparency"). No information could be found on prosecution or punishment of border officials among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. Instead, the Canadian Migration Integrity Officer at the Embassy of Canada reported the following:

In general terms, entry/exit controls are quite ineffective and use of counterfeit/altered documents and impostors extremely prevalent. Immigration Officers are relatively poorly trained in detection of counterfeit documents and in some cases, very open to corruption, especially on land border crossings. (Canada 15 Apr. 2008a)

Furthermore, he added

[The] southern border, along [the] Sudanese/Egyptian border is susceptible to corruption and until [the] recent escalation of hostilities along the Gaza Strip, [the] Israeli/Egyptian border used to be heavily exposed to corruption. In other words, corruption is driven by the law of supply and demand and [the] prevalence of criminal organization's ability to penetrate certain areas. Current security considerations along the Israeli/Egyptian border make it quite difficult for the border guards to look the other way. (Canada 15 Apr. 2008b)

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources, including: The Arab Lawyers Union and Transparency International (Egypt Section) did not respond.

Internet sites, including: Anti-corruption Practitioners Network, Factiva, Programme on Governance in the Arab Region, Transparency International, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank.

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